THE COUNSELOR
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

1950

February 2, 1979

MEMORANDUM TO: M - Mr. Read
CA - Ms. Watson
S/P - Mr. Lake
H - Mr. Bennet
L - Mr. Marks
ARA - Amb. Vaky
M/CT - Amb. Quainton
HA - Ms. Derian

FROM: Matt Nimetz

SUBJECT: Jonestown Follow-up

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 2/2/79
EO ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
NEED EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒
RELEASE DENIED
FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

Based on the many comments received, we have prepared a new draft cable on Jonestown follow-up. I would appreciate your comments by COB Monday, February 5.

Attachment:

Draft Cable.

cc: C - Amb. Crimmins
C - Mr. Carpenter
L - Mr. Hansell
H - Mr. Atwood
M - Mr. Murray
M - Dr. Pieczenik
M/MO - Mr. Jones
PA - Mr. Carter
D - Ms. Barnes
HA - Mr. Martin
L - Mr. Michel
CA - Mr. Horan
CA - Mr. Gise
ARA - Mr. Grove
ARA - Mr. Bushnell
ARA/CAR - Mr. McCoy
S/P - Mr. Hume
A/BF - Mr. Feldman
A/SY - Mr. Ackerman

UNCLASSIFIED
(With CONFIDENTIAL Attachment)

The Jonestown tragedy highlighted the potential impact that individual groups of Americans may have on U.S. diplomatic and consular concerns. We must all be particularly sensitive to those situations -- admittedly infrequent and usually unique -- where the presence overseas of a discrete and often self-contained group of Americans may adversely affect the conduct of relations with the host government, the interests of the USG, or the welfare of American citizens abroad.

There are legal and constitutional factors that posts should consider when reporting on such situations. Our actions must not impinge on the free exercise of constitutional rights and not conflict with First Amendment freedoms of speech, association, and the practice of religious beliefs. We must be sensitive to the fact that every American has a basic right to be left alone. Under certain circumstances, the very act of gathering and reporting information may have a chilling effect on the exercise of constitutional liberties.

The Privacy Act clearly precludes reporting or record-keeping by the Department with respect to an individual's exercise of his constitutional freedoms. The only

exceptions relate to specific criminal investigations or activities done with the individual's knowledge and consent.

However, organized groups of Americans overseas whose activities may have an impact on foreign policy concerns, adversely affect the welfare of American citizens or violate U.S. or foreign laws are of legitimate interest to the USG. Posts should inform the Department about the nature and activities of such groups. This can be done, in most cases, without identifying specific individuals and without characterizations of constitutionally protected beliefs or dogmas.

Post should report by normal telegraphic channels. In cases where the post is unsure how these guidelines relate to a specific group, you should seek guidance from the country directorate who will consult closely with CA, L and other appropriate offices.